

Volume 10  
No. 1, 2012

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Gender & Behaviour



Published by  
THE IFE CENTRE FOR  
PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES,  
Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

***VOLUME TEN,  
NUMBER ONE, 2012***

**ISSN: 1596-9231**

**Published by the Ife Centre for Psychological Studies,  
Ile-Ife, Nigeria.**

# **GENDER & BEHAVIOUR**

**Volume 10 No 1, JUNE, 2012**

*Published by: Ife Psycholog**IA** (RC 011934)  
Ife Centre for Psychological Studies/Services.  
P.O. Box 1548, Ile-Ife  
Osun State, Nigeria.*

*&*

*The Network of Psychological Studies of Women Issues  
Department of Psychology  
University of Ibadan  
Ibadan.*

# EDITORIAL

With this Volume Ten Number One, 2012 we have maintained our younger journal: Gender & Behaviour for a decade. The Twenty articles that make this issue are from every corner of the world, all aimed at illuminating the gender and behaviour studies terrain. In December 2012, we shall publish the Volume 10, Number 2 with our DECADE INDEX of Gender & Behaviour.

I am greatly beholden to Matthew Olasupo (Manager) who has been a great inspiration to me. We congratulate all the stakeholders of our efforts. God will bless you. We say a big thank you to all our wellwishers.

Sincerely yours,

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**The Viagra Revolution**  
**The three pills;**  
**Cialis(tadalafil),**  
**Viagra(Sildenafil), and**  
**Levitra(Vardenafil) have**  
**revolutionalized the treatment**  
**of erectile disorder over the**  
**past decade**

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## **The Role of Libraries in Curbing Teenage Pregnancy in Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

Teenage Pregnancy is fast becoming a regular trend today in Nigeria. This is due to the fact that most parents still feel it is absurd to educate their children on sex education. As a result of this most teenagers learn about sex education through their peers, mass media, etc. Due to the low level of knowledge of these teenagers on sex education, the level of teenage pregnancy tends to be on the increase.

The library as an institution therefore has the responsibility to provide information contained in information materials of various format to the target group in order to curb the challenge of teenage pregnancy. The Federal Government, Nigerian Library Association and other stake holders need to collaborate to establish school libraries and public libraries where they are nonexistent and revitalize these libraries where they are existing but not functional. These libraries should also carry out their function thoroughly by collaborating with Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) to organize programs that will serve as a form of orientation to teenagers on teenage pregnancy and how it can be avoided.

### **Introduction**

Education is widely recognized as the gateway to economic security and opportunity particularly for the girl child and this does not exclude Sex education. (Nwajiuba 2011). Wikipedia(2011) defines sex education as a "a broad term used to describe about human sexual anatomy, sexual reproduction, sexual intercourse, reproductive health, emotional relations, reproductive rights and responsibilities, abstinence, contraception, and other aspects of human sexual behavior.

Adepoju (2005) averred that in recent times, the youth who constitute ages 10-24 years and 36.7 per cent of the Nigerian population, are found to be highly vulnerable to antisocial behaviors such as violent crimes, unsafe sexual activities and drug abuse among others. Most parents believe their children need basic information about sex and sexual self protection. Mkumbo and Ingham (2010) posited that provision of Sex and

Relationships Education (SRE) in schools is crucial in protecting young people against sexual health problems, such as HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancy. Alo and Akinde (2010) in their article titled, "Premarital Sexual Activities in an Urban Society of Southwest Nigeria" asserted that "Nigeria is a relatively culturally conservative country; the topic of sex is still considered a taboo between parents and children. A child learns through the mass media and peers unguided. Children learn the important topic of sex education in negative manners, rather than having proper sex socialization at home or in schools". This point was buttressed by Chukwudum and Gloria (2001) when they posited that "Parent-child communication in sexual matters was either non-existent or negative before maturity, which for girls is at age of menarche." Mothers are uncomfortable and think it is embarrassing imparting sex education to their daughters. They believe girls can get information through:

- Their friends and elder sisters
- Doctors, health personnel and teachers

They also feel sex education should be imparted to girls only after attaining menarche.

### **Teenage Pregnancy and Consequencies**

Odu and Christian (2007) posited that "teenage parenthood is by no means a new phenomenon, women have tended to begin childbearing during their teens and early twenties" and according to them "physical and sexual maturity among adolescents is not accompanied by an ability to handle their sexuality in a responsible manner. And it's noted that young people, especially the very young are faced today with decision making beyond their experience".

Olaitan (2010) asserted that "the problem of unwanted pregnancy can be, due to poverty and ignorance of the parents on sex education. It has also been found that the type of films teenagers watch has exposed them negatively. Some fall victim of unwanted pregnancy through peer pressure since most parents think it is embarrassing to teach or talk to their children about sex education and feel the children should learn from friends, classmates or elder sisters. The consequences of unwanted pregnancy are numerous, he further asserted that "School attendance becomes more difficult or impossible while nursing a baby; the teenage mother may be forced to drop out from school. Where she is abandoned into the boy or the man responsible for her pregnancy, such forced cohabitation arrangements hardly last". Female dropouts from school undermine the government's efforts in ensuring education for all and achieving one of the Millennium Development Goals. The national productivity is also negatively affected as high school dropout rates due to teenage

pregnancy and low education levels means lower human capital development, consequently leading to lower incomes and reduced contributions to the Gross Domestic Product. Despite all efforts made by the government and teachers in integrating sex education into the school curriculum, there is still a very high rate of teenage pregnancy recorded in the country.

Arowojolu et al (2002) posited that "indiscriminate sexual intercourse exposes youths to the risk of sexually transmitted diseases especially where it involves multiple sexual partners. The implication of this is far-reaching, considering the several complications of STDs especially AIDS"

Alo and Akinde (2010) reported that the consequences of premarital sex, STDs (as well as HIV) are higher for females than for males. If a young girl becomes pregnant, she places herself and her unborn child at further risk because a young girl's body may not have developed to the point of being able to handle childbirth safely. Even if a teen mother escapes severe health consequences, she must still face the serious responsibilities of parenthood.

Ilika & Anthony (2004) posited that the health and social consequences of unwanted or unintended teenage pregnancy have been very much described. These include, among others, increased risk of maternal death, pregnancy and birth-related complications such as excessive bleeding, anaemia, obstructed labour, stillbirth and infant death. The socio-economic consequences include education and job termination, stigmatization, and loss of self-esteem and perpetuation of the poverty trap and cycle.

### **Rising Rate of Teenage Pregnancy**

In a report filed by Hamed Shobiye in Punch on the web on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2011, the World Health Organization has said that Nigeria and six other countries account for half of the world's adolescent births. They reiterated further that "an estimated 16million girls aged between 15 and 19 years give birth every year, with 95 per cent of these births occurring in developing countries. This makes up 11 per cent of all births worldwide."

Guttmacher Institute (2010) reported that among black women aged 15-19 years, the nationwide pregnancy rate fell by 45% (from 223.8 per 1,000 to 122.7) between 1990 and 2005, before increasing to 126.3 in 2006. Among non-hispanic white teenagers, the pregnancy rate declined 50% in the same period (from 86.6 per 1,000 to 43.3), before increasing to 44.0 in 2006.

Among Hispanic teenagers (of any race), the pregnancy rate decreased by 26% (from 169.7 per 1,000 to 124.9) between 1992 and 2005, before rising to 126.6 in 2006.

equip individual with such knowledge, skill, and attitude that will enable them to:

- live meaningful and fulfilling lives;
- contribute to the development of the society;
- derive maximum social economic and cultural benefits from the society and
- discharge their civil obligation.

School libraries that are well equipped with current and relevant materials are considered to be great assets because it will afford the students and teachers to study independently and also provide an avenue for consulting materials that will provide factual knowledge needed for the day to day challenges they face and in the end, make intelligent decisions concerning their personal lives. School libraries helps in facilitating the planning and implementation of learning programs that will equip students with the skills necessary to succeed in a constantly changing social and economic environment. Through resource-based programs, students acquire skills to collect, critically analyze and organize information, solve problems and communicate their understandings.

Libraries have an important role in the advancement of knowledge. This role can be effectively carried out with well-structured and well-planned library services. Library services, including the packaging and repackaging of information, have been provided in Nigeria for many decades (Iwhiwhu, 2008).

According to Kargbo (2002), librarians need to work with community agencies and professional persons to develop programmes that will promote good health principles. It helps to have librarians assist medical professionals in an analysis of ongoing programmes to see exactly the repercussions of such issues as drug abuse, child abuse, teenage pregnancy, maternity and HIV/AIDS. A good example of an organization librarians could collaborate with is GPI; this stands for Girls Power Initiative and it was established in 1993 by Bene Madunagu and Grace Osakwe in Calabar. It was established to build self esteem of young Nigerian girls by giving them information about reproductive rights. This type of organization could be replicated all over Nigerian states and cities to enhance the level of information teenagers are exposed to that will help shape their lives.

Kargbo (2002) observed that the culture of librarianship in the country tends to be responsible only to itself. That is to say, the structure of its work, its commitment and loyalties are defined institutionally and professionally rather than in relationship to the community which is the focus of its work. He further



reiterated' that in order for librarians to attain their goals in this era they should provide quality service tailored to the immediate needs of their respective communities and sensitize people to the availability of such services. Librarians should pay utmost attention to the information needs of teenagers and encourage them to use the library. A programme that has been creatively and well designed that will bring teenagers together to discuss topics or subjects of common interest should be put in place in the library; this will enhance their ability to exchange ideas, knowledge and information.

Public libraries play an important role in societal and national development in that they contribute a lot in promoting sociocultural and educational services. If a better community is to be built, then a public library must have a vital impact on it. Public libraries help to facilitate lifelong learning, ensure quality of life, and encourage responsible social behavior. It should be seen as a source of value added information that is got in time and accurately. Librarians in public libraries should remain true to their core business of providing information materials to users and also provide a good public space with a welcoming atmosphere.

According to Wheeler and Goldhor (1962) public libraries are meant for the following:

- Enable information education opportunities for the citizens in the communities.
- Enrich the knowledge of individuals in various subject disciplines where they undertake formal education.
- Provide awareness to meet the information needs of people.
- Support the educational, civil and cultural activities of groups and organizations.
- Provide recreational opportunities and encourage constructive use of leisure time.

The establishment of public libraries in Nigeria has been mostly limited to urban areas and this has resulted in illiteracy and ignorance among the people in rural areas. The Federal Government, Nigerian Library Association in association with other stakeholders should join hands and establish public libraries in rural areas where there none and revitalize others where they are available. This will ensure that teenagers in rural areas get the same amount of information accessible to their counterparts in the urban areas.

Schools should have functional and viable libraries that are adequate and suitable for learning. These libraries are to be stocked with materials that are focused on promoting the development of teenagers both academically and socially.

Librarians in conjunction with schools should organize talk shows, seminars and workshops where reputable resource persons will be invited to talk and share their experience with the students. These resource persons could be experts in the medical field, teachers, librarians, social workers or those working with Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Drama presentations and documentaries showing the effect of teenage pregnancy should also form part of the program in schools. Students can also go on excursion to hospitals to see teenagers that have contacted HIV/AIDS, Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF), anemia and other early pregnancy sickness.

Students can come together and organize a forum or "a say no to teenage pregnancy" clubs where they will gather to discuss, share experiences and learn from each other. These clubs are to be monitored by a librarian who will take stock of the teenagers information needs as they discuss and further ensure that the library gets materials that will address such needs.

### **Conclusion**

The role of libraries cannot be overemphasized when it comes to provision of information and information materials. The library and librarians can help in solving the problem of teenage pregnancy by providing adequate information material such as books, audio-visual materials and educational group programme. Availability of these materials will address the needs of this target group and also contribute to developing, maintaining, and improving their social well being.

Parents should not be left out in this campaign against teenage pregnancy, most especially those in the rural areas where early marriage is encouraged. They should be sensitized regularly about the harmful effects of teenage pregnancy and this could be done by a librarian. This information could be passed to them on market days or when there is an important village meeting where all villagers will be gathered though this has to be done with permission of the village chief.

### **Recommendation**

Many teenagers have learnt so much about HIV/AIDS via different media most especially the bill boards that are located strategically everywhere. HIV/AIDS have enjoyed so much publicity ever since it was discovered and almost everybody knows that it kills. Therefore, it is recommended that teenagers

be informed about the consequences of getting pregnant prematurely by putting up bill boards with pictures that will depict what these consequences are. These bill boards are to be located in strategic places such as schools, hospitals, hotels, in various communities etc. Publicity could also take the form of jingles on radio and television stations.

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ISSN: 1596-9231